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Letter dated 20 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to inform you on behalf of my Government that the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom — in association with those of the United States and Australia — engaged in military action in Iraq on 20 March 2003. The action is continuing.

The action follows a long history of non-cooperation by Iraq with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and numerous findings by the Security Council that Iraq has failed to comply with the disarmament obligations imposed on it by the Council, including in resolutions 678 (1990), 687 (1991) and 1441 (2002). In its resolution 1441 (2002), the Council reiterated that Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security; that Iraq has failed, in clear violation of its obligations, to disarm; and that in consequence Iraq is in material breach of the conditions for the ceasefire at the end of hostilities in 1991 laid down by the Council in its resolution 687 (1991). Military action was undertaken only when it became apparent that there was no other way of achieving compliance by Iraq.

The objective of the action is to secure compliance by Iraq with its disarmament obligations as laid down by the Council. All military action will be limited to the minimum measures necessary to secure this objective. Operations will be conducted in accordance with the international laws of armed conflict. Targets have been carefully chosen to avoid civilian casualties.

I would be grateful if you could circulate the text of the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jeremy **Greenstock**

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